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L'ALLEGRO.

L'ALLEGRO.

BY

JOHN MILTON.

ILLUSTRATED WITH NUMEROUS ENGRAVINGS.

PHILADELPHIA:

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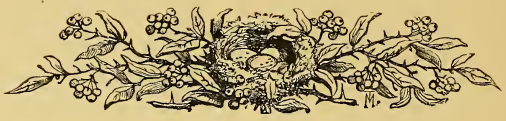
ILLUSTRATIONS.



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

PAGE

Hence, loathed Melancholy 13

Till the dappled dawn doth rise 15

Come and trip it as you go
On the light fantastic toe 16

Right against the eastern gate,
Where the sun begins his state 19

And at my window bid good-morrow 22

The hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn 23

And the milkmaid singeth blithe 25

And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale 27

Shallow brooks, and rivers wide 28

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

PAGE

Towers and battlements it sees
Bosom'd high in tufted trees 29

Hard by a cottage chimney smokes 31

And then in haste her bower she leaves 33

And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday 35

Then to the spicy nut-brown ale 37

And he by friar's lantern led 38

How the drudging Goblin sweat
To earn his cream-bowl duly set 39

Tower'd cities please us then 41

Throngs of knights, and barons bold 42

Sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child 43

Lap me in soft Lydian airs 46

L'ALLEGRO.

HENCE, loathed Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born,
In Stygian cave forlorn,
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy;

Find out some uncouth cell,

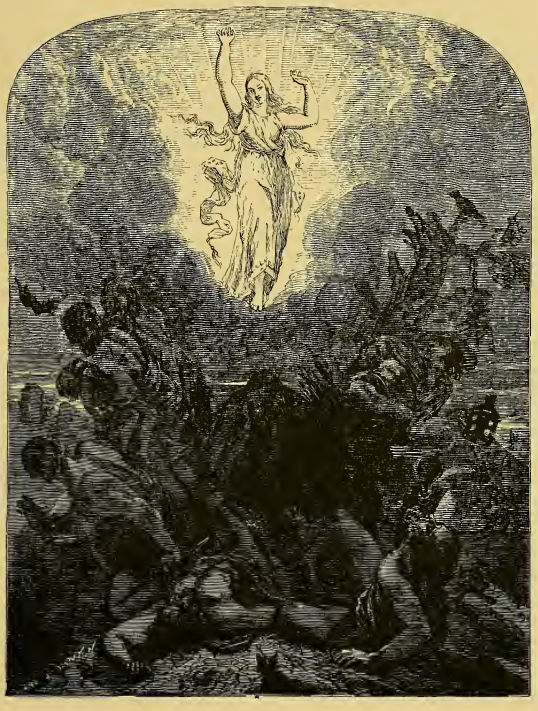
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,

And the night-raven sings;

There, under ebon shades, and low-brow'd rocks,

As ragged as thy locks,

In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.



But come, thou goddess fair and free,

In heaven yclep'd Euphrosyne,

And by men, heart-easing Mirth,

Whom lovely Venus at a birth,

With two sister Graces more,

To ivy-crowned Bacchus bore;

Or whether (as some sager sing)

The frolic wind that breathes the spring,

Zephyr with Aurora playing,

As he met her once a-maying,

There on beds of violets blue,

And fresh-blown roses wash'd in dew,

Fill'd her with thee a daughter fair,

So buxom, blithe, and debonair.

Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee

Jest, and youthful Jollity,

Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,

Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,

Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,

And love to live on dimple sleek;

Sport that wrinkled Care derides,

And Laughter holding both his sides.

Come and trip it as you go

On the light fantastic toe;

And in thy right hand lead with thee

The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty:

And, if I give thee honor due,

Mirth, admit me of thy crew,

To live with her, and live with thee,

In unreproved pleasures free:

To hear the lark begin his flight,

And singing startle the dull night,

From his watch-tow'r in the skies,

Till the dappled dawn doth rise;

Then to come, in spite of sorrow,

And at my window bid good-morrow,

Through the sweetbrier, or the vine,

Or the twisted eglantine;

While the cock with lively din

Scatters the rear of darkness thin,

And to the stack, or the barn door,

Stoutly struts his dames before:

Oft list'ning how the hounds and horn

Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,

From the side of some hoar hill,

Through the high wood echoing shrill:

Sometimes walking not unseen

By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,

Right against the eastern gate,

Where the great sun begins his state,

Robed in flames, and amber light,

The clouds in thousand liveries dight;

While the ploughman near at hand

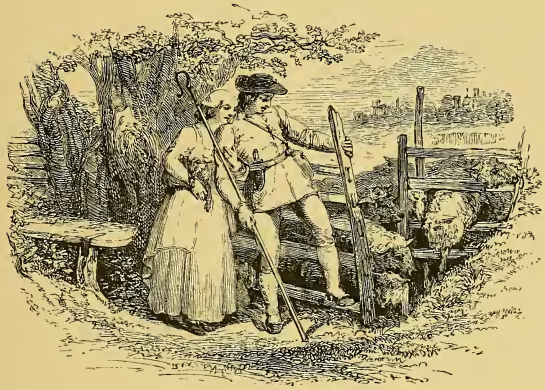
Whistles o'er the furrow'd land,

And the milkmaid singeth blithe,

And the mower whets his scythe,

And every shepherd tells his tale,

Under the hawthorn in the dale.



Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,

Whilst the landscape round it measures;

Russet lawns, and fallows gray,

Where the nibbling flocks do stray;

Mountains, on whose barren breast

The laboring clouds do often rest;

Meadows trim with daisies pied;

Shallow brooks, and rivers wide:

Towers and battlements it sees

Bosom'd high in tufted trees,

Where perhaps some beauty lies,

The Cynosure of neighboring eyes.

Hard by a cottage chimney smokes,

From betwixt two aged oaks,

Where Corydon and Thyrsis met

Are at their savory dinner set

Of herbs, and other country messes,

Which the neat-handed Phyllis dresses;

And then in haste her bower she leaves,

With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;

Or, if the earlier season lead,

To the tann'd haycock in the mead.

Sometimes, with secure delight,

The upland hamlets will invite,

When the merry bells ring round,

And the jocund rebecks sound

To many a youth and many a maid,

Dancing in the chequer'd shade,

And young and old come forth to play

On a sunshine holiday,

Till the livelong daylight fail;

Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,

With stories told of many a feat,

How Fairy Mab the junkets eat;

She was pinch'd and pull'd, she said,

And he by friar's lantern led;

Tells how the drudging Goblin sweat

To earn his cream-bowl duly set,

When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,

His shadowy flail had thresh'd the corn,

That ten day-laborers could not end,

Then lays him down, the lubber fiend,

And, stretch'd out all the chimney's length,

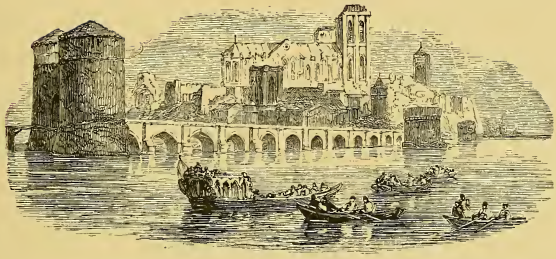
Basks at the fire his hairy strength;

And cropful out of doors he flings

Ere the first cock his matin rings.

Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,

By whispering winds soon lull'd to sleep.

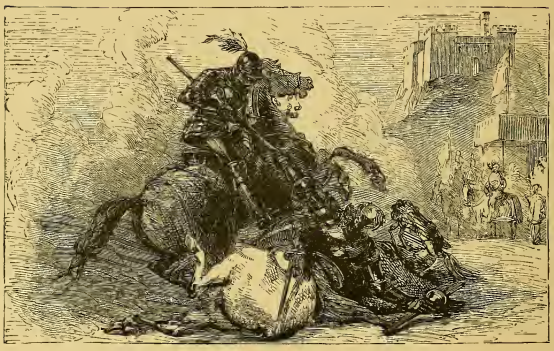


Tower'd cities please us then,

And the busy hum of men,

Where throngs of knights, and barons bold,

In weeds of peace high triumphs hold,



With store of ladies, whose bright eyes

Rain influence, and judge the prize

Of wit or arms, while both contend

To win her grace whom all commend.

There let Hymen oft appear

In saffron robe, with taper clear,

And pomp, and feast, and revelry,

With mask and antique pageantry.

Such sights as youthful poets dream

On summer eves by haunted stream.

Then to the well-trod stage anon,

If Jonson's learned sock be on,

Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,

Warble his native wood-notes wild.

And ever, against eating cares,

Lap me in soft Lydian airs,

Married to immortal verse,

Such as the melting soul may pierce

In notes, with many a winding bout

Of linked sweetness long drawn out,

With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,

The melting voice through mazes running;

Untwisting all the chains that tie

The hidden soul of Harmony;

That Orpheus' self may heave his head

From golden slumber on a bed

Of heap'd Elysian flowers, and hear

Such strains as would have won the ear

Of Pluto, to have quite set free

His half-regain'd Eurydice.

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These delights if thou canst give,

Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

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